John Florio, who was similarly of Jewish extraction; but the two facts, taken in conjunction, illustrate how potent was the influence of Jews on English letters even when religious intolerance excluded them rigidly from the country.

It was with the seventeenth century and the publication of the Authorised Version of the Bible that Hebraic influence in English literature rose to its highest point. It reached its climax in John Milton, who might almost be said to have thought in Hebrew, though he expressed himself in English. This was not entirely dependent (as was probably the case with the majority of his contemporaries) upon acquaintance with the English Bible. He was a competent Hebrew scholar, with a fair knowledge of Rabbinical lore, which manifests itself time after time in *Paradise Lost.* To what agency was this due? The authority who has made the most detailed enquiries into the subject speaks only of his University studies at the feet of the erudite Hoseah Meade at Cambridge. But it may be conjectured that, during his travels in Italy in 1637-9, he encountered some learned Jews—possibly even in the company of Galileo, who is known not to have been averse from their society. There is evidence, moreover, that the blind poet made the acquaintance of Menasseh ben Israel during the latter's mission to Oliver Cromwell in 1655-7 to secure permission for his co-religionists to resettle in England; and it is by no means improbable that erudite conversations

between the two men, who had so much in common, may have ensued.

But Milton was only one out of many. George Herbert and John Donne echoed the Psalmist: Herrick quoted the "Ethics of the Fathers": and even so spontaneous a production as Walton's *Compkat Angler* is filled with Hebraic lore, obtained partly from literary sources and partly through the medium of the learned globe-trotter,